

CULTURAL BARRIORS TO THE JOB SEARCH

U.S. EMPLOYER EXPECTATIONS	CONFLICTING VALUES WITH OTHER CULTURES
SELF PROMOTION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assertive Able to openly discuss goals and accomplishments with confidence Follow-up with employers Appropriate dress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unless a group activity, mentioning specific skills and accomplishments is seen as boastful Following up with employers about application status is seen as rude
DIRECTNESS IN COMMUNICATION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Openly responds to questions in a direct manner Maintains eye contact with interviewer and displays appropriate nonverbal feedback 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintaining eye contact with someone of higher power is seen as disrespectful
SELF-DISCLOSURE	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Openly discusses experiences, hobbies, strengths and weaknesses Answers personality questions regarding leadership and problem-solving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Personal questions are considered an invasion of privacy and are only discussed with close friends and family
CAREER SELF-AWARENESS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Openly demonstrates knowledge of personal self in relation to short-term and long-term career goals Discusses career concentration and expresses interest in doing specific job tasks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jobs are often assigned by government or family Questioning someone about career role is seen as disloyal Companies assign work responsibilities Individuals must be flexible and willing to accept available job
INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses multiple resources to identify job opportunities Actively seeks career information independently Networking with friends, family and professionals is crucial 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jobs opportunities are found through family and/or the government Depends on specific person/people to coordinate job search (e.g. advisor or employer agent)
INFORMALITY	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interviewer and interviewee may engage in friendly, open conversation that may incorporate some joking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Job applicant is very polite to interviewer and is very careful about saving face and not coming off impolite Handshaking, touching, using first names, crossing legs, etc. may be seen as inappropriate
PUNCTUALITY	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Arrive approximately 5-15 minutes early for interview/appointment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time is not of high value, and 15 minutes – 2 hours of lateness is not seen as insulting
EFFECTIVE RÉSUMÉS AND COVER LETTERS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Résumés need to be 1-page, error-free and concise Strong focus on accomplishments and skills that relate specifically to the job Personalized according to the job and employer Does not contain a picture or personal information such as a age, sex, religion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Résumés are detailed chronology of academic and work experience and not a tool of self-promotion May contain personal information and a picture
INDIVIDUAL EQUALITY	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Race, sex, and age should not affect the outcome of a hiring decision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Males are expected to assume dominance in interactions with females
PREPARATION	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain as much information as possible about the job and the employer and demonstrate this in the cover letter and during the interview 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Researching the organization may indicate excessive initiative or independence

US EMPLOYER EXPECTATIONS AND PERCEPTIONS

Characteristic	Employer Expectations	Employer Perceptions
<p>Personal Responsibility and Branding</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All candidates are to take responsibility for their own job search and personally market their skills and abilities to employers • Candidates are expected to research employers, find job openings, reach out to employers and follow-up with employers in a timely manner • Candidates should talk about marketable skills and accomplishments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates who speak modestly about personal achievements may seem uncomfortable working independently and unable to achieve personal goals • Candidates who fail to take responsibility for their job search show employers that they lack accountability • Candidates who focus too much on technical skills risk demonstrating “in the box” thinking
<p>Interpersonal Interaction & Networking</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All candidates are expected to demonstrate abilities beyond technical skills, therefore joining organizations and making friends from other cultures is important • While networking, start with informal conversation; focus the conversation around the other person and their needs and interests • Always greet professionals with a firm handshake 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only interacting with people from your home country may inform employers that you are not comfortable with American culture or language • Handshakes that are too limp demonstrate a lack of confidence
<p>Written Communication</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poorly written documents are typically not given consideration; employers expect all candidates to have proficient written business level English • Résumés and cover letters are to be free of errors and awkward language • Résumés and cover letters are to be primarily focused on accomplishments and abilities that directly relate to the job description 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates who use translators to type correspondence to employers may use words incorrectly and come off sounding awkward • Poor grammar and spelling gives off the impression that a candidate has trouble with the English language and may have a hard time communicating with colleagues and customers
<p>Verbal Communication</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All candidates are expected to have proficient verbal business level English • Employers expect candidates to be prepared and demonstrate assertiveness, confident answers in a clear, projecting voice with natural enthusiasm 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spending too much time searching for the right word to say may lead to employers questioning your ability to communicate effectively
<p>Eye Contact</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates are to make direct eye contact when corresponding with people of all authority levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates who demonstrate averted eye contact appear to lack confidence
<p>Professional Appearance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates are to dress professionally and demonstrate exceptional personal hygiene out of respect to the employer • Gentlemen are expected to wear a shirt and tie under a business suit with polished dress shoes • Ladies are expected to wear a professional dress or pants suit with hosiery and polished closed toe shoes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wearing unprofessional clothing gives off the impression that the candidate lacks attention to detail. • Candidates who wear ill-fitting clothing that is wrinkled come off looking unprofessional • Candidates who do not demonstrate personal hygiene risk coming off disrespectful
<p>Professional Equality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender, race, class, age and marital status are never to be an issue in a business or interviewing relationship • Religious beliefs are considered personal, therefore not to be discussed to employers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates who speak specifically about race, class, gender, etc. are considered disrespectful • Résumés that include pictures, personal or religious information are seen as inappropriate